

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR'S REACTION TO CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH
HONDURAS ON BORDER AND OTHER QUESTIONS

REF: SAN SALVADOR 2118

1. ALTHOUGH PRESS COVERAGE ON SALVADORAN FOREIGN MINISTER RODRIGUEZ PORTH'S TRIP TO LIMA ON MAY 3 TO CONDUCT TALKS ON EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS BORDER DISPUTE HAS NOT BEEN OVERLY EXTENSIVE, THE TRIP HAS BEEN FULLY REPORTED IN ALL NEWSPAPERS. THE NEWS ARTICLES HAVE GENERALLY GIVEN A "BUSINESS AS USUAL" ASPECT TO FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ALVARO ERNESTO MARTINEZ' REPLACEMENT BY RODRIGUEZ PORTH ON APRIL 28, AND HAVE INDICATED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN EL SALVADOR'S POSITION CONCERNING ITS BORDER DISPUTE WITH HONDURAS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRESS HAS NOT DOWNPLAYED THE DIFFICULTIES OF COMING TO A RESOLUTION ON THIS DISPUTE; FOR INSTANCE, THE MAY 4 EDITION OF THE AFTERNOON "DIARIO LATINO" HEADLINED QTE SALVADORAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN LIMA ADMITS DIFFICULTY OF RESOLVING BORDER QUESTION UNQTE.

2. PRESS PLAY ON AND MEDIA INTEREST IN THE EL SALVADOR-
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HONDURAS BORDER DISPUTE DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE TAKEN SECOND AND EVEN THIRD-PLAE IN TERMS OF PRIORITY. THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION AND THE QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN NEWS ARTICLES AND EDITORIAL COLUMNS. NEVERTHELESS, REPORTING ON THE EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE BORDER DISPUTE AND OTHER MATTERS HAS BEEN FAIRLY COM-

PLETE.

3. IN A WIDELY CIRCULATED STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON MAY 1, RODRIGUEZ PORTH SAID HE HAD "FAITH" IN THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH HONDURAS. HE COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS BETWEEN EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS WAS DEPENDENT TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THE INTERVENTION OF THE MEDIATOR "(BUSTAMANTE Y RIVERO), THAT THIS "DOESN'T MEAN THAT BOTH SIDES CANNOT HAVE DIRECT TALKS FOR THE PURPOSE OF HASTENING THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM AND PRESENTING TO THE MEDIATOR WITHIN RECORD TIME FORMULAS FOR AN IMMEDIATE SETTLEMENT."

4. DR. GUILLERMO TRIGUEROS, A MEMBER OF THE SALVADORAN DELEGATION TO THE TALKS RECENTLY CONCLUDED IN LIMA, ON THIS RETURN TO EL SALVADOR ON SATURDAY, MAY 6, STATED TO THE PRESS THAT HE WAS "OPTIMISTIC" ABOUT THE TALKS WITH HONDURAS BECAUSE OF THE "CORDIALITY" OF THE HONDURAN DELEGATION AT LIMA AND THE "DEDICATION" OF DR. JOSE LUIS BUSTAMANTE Y RIVERO. TRIGUEROS SAID HE COULD MAKE NO FURTHER COMMENTS AND REFERRED TO THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE MEDIATOR IN LIMA. THE COMMUNIQUE WAS PUBLISHED IN ALL MAJOR SALVADORAN NEWSPAPERS AND BASICALLY SET FORTH THE FACT THAT BOTH SIDES PRESENTED PAPERS TO MEDIATOR INDICATING AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND ISSUES STILL TO BE RESOLVED.
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